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In the first four chapters of History of Us book 4, I learned about how our government started to grow after the revolutionary war. I learned about our first president, about how the political parties began, and about the White House and nations Capital were built.

George Washington was our first president. Forthwith, he set an example for all future presidents. He had been elected unanimously. Every one respected George Washington. He had a very humble personality. He loved living at Mount Vernon with his wife, but he left to be president because he felt it was his duty to his country. As He rode in a carriage to New York, in every town, citizens came out to see him and welcome him. There were parades, bonfires, fireworks, speeches, ceremonial dinners, or choruses as George Washington waved courteously from his carriage. As he passed by, he recognized many faces of soldiers who fought with him in battle. He mounted a white horse to ride into Philadelphia. There was a parade of horsemen that kept growing longer and longer. Peale’s fifteen-year-old daughter hid in some shrubbery, as George Washington passed under an archway. She pulled a lever and a laurel wreath fell and sat upon his head. He humbly rode on, but only after kissing the girl. At Trenton there was a chorus of girls and women singing and throwing flowers in his path. George Washington actually took the time to write a thank you letter to the girls and women. Everyone was proud that he was going to be their first president.

George Washington understood that even though he was head of the executive branch, he couldn’t make all the decisions by himself. So he appointed Thomas Jefferson as his secretary of state. That meant he would help Washington with foreign affairs. Jefferson was perfect for this job because he had lived in France, and knew a lot about foreign affairs.

Washington named Alexander Hamilton as secretary of treasury. That meant that he managed the country’s finances. Hamilton was a good financial advisor for Washington.

Henry Knox was named secretary of war, which meant that he was in charge of national security. He had been general in charge or artillery during the Revolutionary War. He was an old friend of Washington’s.

Jefferson and Hamilton had very different opinions. They both knew that power was very important, but they didn’t agree on who should have the most power. Hamilton believed that the government needed to be strong if it was going to help everyone, and not just those with the loudest voice. He believed the government should be run by aristocratic leaders, which meant that he thought the prosperous well educated people should run the country. He was also wary of the rich though. He believed they could be more concerned about themselves sometimes.

Jefferson believed in regular citizens. He believed they could govern themselves as long as they were educated. So he made a plan for public schools and colleges. He wanted to add an amendment that said education should be free. Political parties were made because of these two differences. They were not the Democratic and Republican parties we have today, but they paved the way for them.

Our capital was originally in New York, but that didn’t seem right. So in 1790 they moved it to Philadelphia. That didn’t seem right either. The states began to argue. They all wanted the capital to be in their state. It was clear; a new city needed to be built. They would name it The District Of Columbia. Major Andrew Ellicott was appointed to survey the land. He named Benjamin Banneker as his assistant. Benjamin Banneker was the son of a freed black slave. This proved that the ability of the brain is not connected to the color of one’s skin.

Pierre Charles L’Enfant became famous when he designed the new nation’s capital. He put a huge grassy mall in the center of the city and put rectangular blocks of building separated by avenues around it. The Capital was to be on a hill so that it overlooked the mall and the Potomac River. The President’s house would also get a view of the mall and river.

A contest was to be held to see who should design the President’s house. Thomas Jefferson entered this contest under a false name. He didn’t want to be chosen just because of who he was. Jefferson did not win the competition. An Irishman named James Hoban won. He became the architect of the White House.

A second contest was to be held to see who should design the Capital. The winner was William Thornton. He was born in the British Virgin Islands and studied in Edinburgh, Scotland to become a doctor. Thornton’s design was praised by Washington as a combination of “grandeur, simplicity, and convenience.”

The Capital took a long time to build. Other architects such as Etienne Hallet, Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Henry Latrobe all started to add ideas to the original winning design. The Capital was still being built when Abraham Lincoln, our 16th president came to office.

This new nation found it very important that the government look for people with good ideas and not worry about the differences. That is why it was important to have a Frenchman, an African-American, a Scotsman, an Englishman, and an Irishman all contribute to make our nation’s capital beautiful and inspirational.